

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01 /131 W

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R 111706Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7993

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3805

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: INTERNAL LIBERAL ELECTIONS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 3640

1. INTERNAL LIBERAL PARTY ELECTIONS WERE HELD IN 193 OF THE 279 MUNICIPALITIES COMPOSING HONDURAS ON SEPTEMBER 8. THE FORCES OF MODESTO RODAS ALVARADO WON APPROXIMATELY 70 PERCENT OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS IN CONTENTION WHILE THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT GROUP OF CARLOS ROBERTO REINA WON ONLY 30 PERCENT.

2. POLOFF HAD CONVERSATIONS WITH REINA AND RODAS ON SEPTEMBER 10. RODAS WAS EXUBERANT ABOUT RESULT AND CONFIDENT THAT IT CEMENTED HIS CONTROL OF THE PARTY. HE SAID THAT HE HOPED THE PARTY WOULD COMPLETELY UNITE BEHIND HIS LEADERSHIP IN A DRIVE TO BRING ABOUT A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY. REINA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT HAD SUFFERED A SEVERE DEFEAT BUT VOWED THEY WOULD CONTINUE THEIR FIGHT AGAINST THE RODISTAS. HE BLAMED THE LOSS ON LACK OF FUNDS, UNFAIR ELECTION PRACTICES BY THE RODISTA CONTROLLED EXECUTIVE

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COMMITTEE AND SUPPORT GIVEN RODAS BY RICARDO ZUNIGA AUGUSTINUS,

LEADER OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY. HE SAID ZUNIGA HAD LITTLE PERSONAL USE FOR RODAS BUT THAT THEY ARE IDEOLOGICALLY ALIKE IN BEING BOTH AUTHORITARIAN AND RIGHTIST.

3. COMMENT: AFTER THE LOCAL ELECTIONS THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE LIBERAL PARTY IS UNDER RODAS' CONTROL. EVEN THOUGH THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT STILL EXISTS IT HAS RELATIVELY LITTLE ROOM FOR MANEUVERING AT PRESENT AND NO INFLUENCE OVER THE PARTY MACHINERY. HOWEVER, IT IS CERTAIN THAT REINA AND OTHER DEMOCRATIC LEFT LEADERS WILL ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE MOVEMENT ACTIVE SO THAT THERE WILL BE VIABLE FUTURE ALTERNATIVE TO RODAS.

4. THE RODAS CONTROLLED LIBERALS AND ZUNIGA CONTROLLED NATIONALISTS REPRESENT A RIGHTIST FRONT OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT DE FACTO MILITARY GOVERNMENT. THE PARTIES ARE SUPPORTED AND ARE IN PART FORMED BY LARGE LANDOWNERS AND THE PORTION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR THAT FEELS THREATENED BY GOVERNMENT ACTIONS. THEIR VIEWS RECEIVE WIDE COVERAGE IN THE PRESS, PARTICULARLY LA PRENSA AND LA NOTICIA. THEY HAVE ALSO SENT EMISSARIES TO NICARAGUA AND GUATEMALA IN AN ATTEMPT TO GAIN SUPPORT FROM THOSE SOURCES BY PAINTING THE LOPEZ REGIME AS COMMUNISTIC OR CHAOTIC.

5. THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE OPPOSITION IS TO CAUSE THE MILITARY TO REMOVE LOPEZ AND IMPOSE A RIGHTIST JUNTA THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY CALL ELECTIONS. AT THIS STAGE AND FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE IT SEEMS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT ANY SUCH DEVELOPMENT WILL OCCUR. LOPEZ IS IN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF AN ORGANIZED FORCE WITHIN THE MILITARY THAT HAS THE ABILITY TO REMOVE HIM. THE MAIN THREATS TO HIS CONTINUED RULE WOULD BE A VERY SHARP ECONOMIC SLUMP OR A SETTLEMENT OF THE BORDER DISPUTE WITH EL SALVADOR THAT COULD BE PAINTED AS A SELLOUT. SANCHEZ

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